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Statement submitted by Zonta International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 26 July 1996.

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* E/CN.6/2001/1.

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Zonta International, an organization of executive professionals whose objectives are to improve the legal, political, economic, educational, health, and professional status of women, is working to end discrimination against women and girls and promote gender equality and the actualization of human rights of women.

Zonta International has focused particular attention on the issue of violence against women, which is one of the many faces of discrimination against women and which affects women's exercise of their human rights in every phase of their lives. Beginning in 1995, when the Zonta International Summit on Violence against Women increased member and media awareness of the many forms which gender-based violence takes, Zonta International has expanded its commitment to the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. During the past three years, through its international project with the United States Fund for UNICEF, Zonta has supported efforts to dramatically reduce the practice of female genital circumcision in Burkina Faso. Another Zonta International project with UNIFEM is working to combat gender-based violence in India by training police personnel in "legal literacy" regarding gender issues and violence, by sponsoring a media campaign to heighten public awareness about violence against women and by creating a catalogue for women of resources for victims of violence. Through the establishment of grants to Zonta clubs around the world, which join with local organizations to provide mediation training for children, which fosters the development of violence-free relationships, Zonta International is promoting gender equality and violence reduction.

Another Zonta International project, a programme of UNICEF to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus in Nepal, addresses what is sometimes another form of discrimination — lack of access to adequate health-care services for women.

Zonta International, as a member of Project 5-0, a network of international women's organizations supporting a variety of projects which increase the economic and productive capacity of women, is addressing gender discrimination resulting from inequalities in economic structures and policies.

In this new millennium, Zonta International looks forward to working with the United Nations and its bodies and with other non-governmental organizations to achieve a world where inequality based on gender, class, caste and ethnicity is absent from every country and from relationships among countries.